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U.S. Is Warned To Speed Production Of Scientists

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[Washington Bureau of The Sun]

Washington, March 28—Congress was warned today that unless it launches "a crash program" to produce scientists and technicians the nation is going to be in bad shape by 1964.

Based on a study just completed for the Research and Development Subcommittee of the Joint Atomic Energy Commission by the Library of Congress, the charge was made that Soviet Russia is rapidly outdistancing this nation in the production of competent scientists and engineers.

Representative Price (D., Ill.), subcommittee chairman, said in a speech to the House that "it is cause for alarm that the Soviet Union has so greatly surpassed us in turning out scientists and technicians."

Atomic Program Cited

If the shortage is allowed to mount steadily until 1964 the economy and the national defense will both be in jeopardy, he said.

"The atomic energy program," he said, "is in serious danger of lagging unless something drastic is done about this manpower program."

Price said the only way this

country can now hope to catch up in the race is for the Federal Government to take the lead in getting science departments and engineering schools to expand and to set up some system of scholarships for bright high-school students willing to enter the scientific field.

Half Enter College

He said that the study completed for the committee discloses that "only half of the high-school graduates who are potential science and engineering students enter college."

And "less than half of those who do enter college finish their preparation for a career in science and engineering," he added.

Part of the difficulty is traceable, he indicated, to the shortage of high-school science and mathematics teachers.

The records show that less than one quarter of the high-school students take algebra, while in 1900 more than half did.

In 1900 one fifth took geometry and a fourth studied physics. Today, Price pointed out, only about one-tenth of high-school students study geometry and four per cent physics, "which is offered in less than half of the nation's high schools."

Price said the Library of Congress study shows that in 1954 we graduated only half as many college-trained specialists in engineering and science as we did in 1930.

"In the same year the Soviets turned out twice as many as we did," he said.

1,200,000 Soviet Graduates

He quoted Allen Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, as saying that in this present decade the Soviet Union will graduate 1,200,000 university students in basic physical sciences while the United States will graduate only 600,000.

"Engineers and scientists trained in Soviet institutions," the Library of Congress study said, "have many virtues, and except in detail, the education preparatory to granting degrees is in no way inferior to that of holders of degrees from American universities and colleges."